

Nesting Habits of *Empidonax insulicola*.—I have just read with great interest in 'The Auk' for July, 1897, the paper by Mr. Harry C. Oberholser, describing the *Empidonax* of the Santa Barbara group as a new species under the name *insulicola*. Mr. Oberholser is of course correct in assuming that I mistook the bird for *E. difficilis* in my list of Santa Cruz birds (Auk, IV, 1887, 329), an error to be explained, though not excused, by the fact that I shot no specimens of this species.

If *insulicola* receives general recognition, as appears probable, some account of its habits, nest and eggs will be of interest.

During my visit to Santa Cruz in the summer of 1886 I saw the Island Flycatchers (if I may suggest a vernacular name) constantly; indeed they were among the most abundant of the land birds. They were to be found chiefly along the rocky, wooded cañons, and their habits closely resembled those of the Wood Pewee. The Island Flycatchers, however, seem to prefer a lower perch, generally within six or eight feet from the ground.

Their note is a disyllabic, lisping call difficult to describe; not wholly unlike the characteristic note of the Least Flycatcher, but much less forcible and metallic.

The first nest which I found was built actually in our camp. A stream, swollen by winter rains to the size of a river, had undermined its banks; shrinking in summer to a mere mountain brook, it had left a high, concave bank on either side. Under one of these arching banks was the nest, neatly concealed among the roots which descended from the trees above. It was placed about seven feet above the level of the stream, and not more than twelve feet away from our camp table, which we had set under this bank to secure protection from the sun. The nest was rather small, saucer-shaped, and composed of material evidently gathered from the bed of the stream,—strips of bark, dead grasses and shreds of dry, bleached vegetable matter. It was neatly and compactly made. The two eggs were dead white, not creamy or buff, and sparsely dotted with reddish about the larger end.

From the first we were careful not to frighten the birds, and they soon became accustomed to our presence. One bird would be almost constantly on the nest, while the other would establish a perch on a bush just across the stream, darting off now and then to catch insects on the wing, and frequently bringing them to its mate. The eggs were hatched on the 13th and 14th respectively, and then the parents were kept very busy supplying the young birds with food. On the 18th the young were mysteriously removed from the nest, probably by the parent birds, and I saw no more of that particular family.

On July 10 I found a pair of Island Flycatchers building their nest in a small pocket in the face of a huge projecting rock over the same stream, half a mile above our camp. It was a situation inaccessible without the aid of a long ladder or a rope, and I was unable to examine the nest.

On July 18 I found a bird's nest, which was built in one of the sea-side caves for which Santa Cruz is famous. This was a very compact and

handsome nest, built directly against the wall of rock, five feet above the floor of the cave. The bird was sitting when I found the nest, and returned as soon as I left the cave. There were three eggs, two evidently much incubated and one infertile, which latter I took. These eggs were creamy white, with pale reddish specks and dots about the larger end. The specimen which I secured is now in the collection of Brown University, Providence, R. I.

The Island Flycatchers had nearly all left Santa Cruz (or retreated to distant parts of the island) by the first of August, and I saw none after August 10. — ELI WHITNEY BLACK, *Syracuse, N. Y.*

The White-throated Sparrow Breeding at Hubbardston, Mass.—A few pairs of *Zonotrichia albicollis* breed each year, or have for the last two years, among the lower hills (about 1000 feet elevation) about Wachusett Mountain in Hubbardston, Mass. — REGINALD HEBER HOWE, JR., *Longwood, Mass.*

Henslow's Sparrow in Michigan—A Correction.—Dr. Charles W. Richmond, Assistant Curator, Department of Birds, U. S. National Museum, calls my attention to a misprint in my article on this species in the April 'Auk' (XIV, p. 220) where, in an extract from his letter, he is made to say "this species ought not to be seen in Michigan." "Seen" should read "rare." I think, however, that Henslow's Sparrow may very properly be termed rare in this State. Should one offer a reward for specimens of this bird taken here he would be surprised at the very few he would obtain. A young ornithologist, in reporting his observations, might easily mistake the Grasshopper Sparrow for this species. — JAMES B. PURDY, *Plymouth, Mich.*

Nesting of *Cardinalis cardinalis* at Nyack, N. Y.—During the spring of 1897 there have been not less than six instances of the breeding of *Cardinalis cardinalis* at Nyack, N. Y. Mr. Rowley, of the American Museum of Natural History, tells me that a pair of this species nested at Hastings, N. Y. So far as is known, I believe this constitutes the northernmost breeding record of this bird. — C. L. BROWNELL, *Nyack, N. Y.*

Notes on the Moul and certain Plumage Phases of *Piranga rubra*.—In 'The Auk' for July, 1891 (pp. 315, 316) I described an instance wherein the Summer Tanager (*P. rubra*), a female, had assumed the plumage of the male. That specimen was collected by my son, Percy Shufeldt, and has since been added to the collections of the U. S. National Museum. Since that date the same collector has added to his private series, thirteen more specimens of this species, and as some of these exhibit certain notable conditions of the moul and plumage, it is my intention here to pass a few remarks upon the more interesting of these. Twelve of the skins are from male birds, while the thirteenth is from an adult female, taken in